MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

2012-2013

ODA Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

Each year, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) sets a course to prevent, identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Every ministry participates through the preparation of its annual accessibility plans, as required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is Ontario's roadmap to become accessible by 2025. It includes accessibility standards in:

- customer service
- information and communications
- employment
- transportation
- the built environment.

This year, the accessibility plans must also address the Integrated Accessibility Regulation (IASR) under the AODA enacted June 2011. The IASR required the OPS to develop a multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. It published the OPS MYAP on January 1, 2012. This included a statement of commitment for the OPS to demonstrate leadership for accessibility on January 1, 2012:

The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services, products and facilities.

Building on the OPS Statement of Commitment, the OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and the Ministry's 2011-2012 former Accessibility plan, the new 2012-13 accessibility plan will continue moving the Ministry of the Attorney General and the OPS to the goal of demonstrating leadership in becoming an accessible province for all Ontarians.

This plan outlines the specific steps the government is taking to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities.

To view every ministry's Accessibility Plans, visit Ontario.ca.

Section One: Report on Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in 2011-12

The Government of Ontario is working to achieve the most accessible province by 2025.

Since 2001, the OPS has been complying with the obligations of the ODA and prepared an annual accessibility plan, which it has made available to the public through the Government of Ontario's public website.

During the last ten years, the Ministry of the Attorney General has strived to be a leader in identifying and addressing accessibility barriers. Some key initiatives over this time include the following:

- In 2002 the ministry's Office of the Legislative Counsel updated the e-Laws website to make it more accessible, as required, by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. E-laws, which was launched in 2000, provides access to official electronic copies of Ontario's statutes and regulations replacing the previous system of print copies only.

- In 2003, the identification card issued under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act* was improved by including braille telephone numbers to call if a guide dog is not allowed to enter an establishment. In addition, information was provided to various community groups to increase community awareness of the rights of people who are blind to bring guide dogs into establishments under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*.

- In 2005, key ministry representatives joined the Courts Disabilities Committee. This advisory committee was established by the Chief Justice of Ontario, to develop recommendations to make Ontario's courts more accessible for persons with mental, physical or sensory disabilities. A report on recommendations was released in 2006.

- In 2007, the Chief Justice of Ontario and the Attorney General for Ontario jointly established a permanent advisory committee with members from the judiciary, legal community, ministry and persons with disabilities. The Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee provides advice on improving accessibility in Ontario's court system and is supported in its work by the Accessibility Unit of the Ministry of the Attorney General.

- In 2008, the ministry added a unique, barrier-free, wheelchair ramp to Osgoode Hall, located in downtown Toronto. The long, low-slope ramp was a special design to address the National Historic Monument status of the building. The Court of Appeal of Ontario sits in Osgoode Hall.

- In 2009, following a two-year pilot project, the ministry formally established the role of courthouse Accessibility Coordinators in each of its permanent courthouses. The Accessibility Coordinators are a one-stop-shop contact point for questions about accessibility features and services in the courthouse. The Coordinators also accept requests and coordinate individual accommodations for people with disabilities who are using ministry services and programs in courthouses. In addition the ministry has established the role of accessibility leads in the Victim Witness Assistance Program and Crown Attorneys' Offices.

- In 2010, the ministry opened the Durham Courthouse which was built with accessibility in all public areas. The courthouse includes many innovative accessibility features such as adjustable witness stands, jury boxes and legal counsel tables allowing people who use wheelchairs to participate comfortably in the courtroom.

- In 2011, the ministry established the Vulnerable Victims and Family Fund which provides additional supports to ensure people with disabilities who are a victim of crime or a family members of a homicide victim can participate in criminal proceedings on an equal basis. Supports can include disability accommodations such as the cost of a support person, a service such as real time captioning or rental of assistive technology.

- Also in 2011, to help make people more aware of the courthouse Accessibility Coordinators, the ministry posted large permanent signs in all permanent courthouses across the province. The signs meet ministry accessibility standards for signage including braille. It's important not only to have services but to make sure people know about the services. Information about accessibility coordinators is also posted on the ministry website and is being added to key forms and correspondence over time. The signs say:

  - Assistance for People with Disabilities: For help with disability-related needs in the courthouse, please speak to any court staff member. Staff members can put you in touch with the courthouse's Accessibility Coordinator, if required.

- In 2011, the ministry began working in partnership with the Ontario Public Service Diversity Office to coordinate a strategy to review Ontario laws for accessibility barriers. Lawyers and ministry accessibility leads across the OPS are involved in this initiative and tools such as the OPS Inclusion Lens have been provided.

In 2011-12, the government continued to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07. As well, it had begun initiatives to comply with the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 in the areas of employment, information and communications, transportation and procurement. The government continues to implement initiatives to enhance accessibility in other areas such as the built environment. The following is a summary of the accessibility initiatives the Ministry of the Attorney General implemented last year, as a result of the 2011-2012 ministry accessibility plan.

Reporting on 2011-2012 AODA obligations

Customer Service

During 2011-2012 the Ministry of the Attorney General has continued to maintain compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07. To support ongoing compliance with the standards, the ministry follows the Ontario Public Service Accessible Customer Service Policy which addresses all requirements under the regulation. To find out more please see the ministry's Our Commitment to Accessibility webpage.

Individual offices, branches and divisions of the ministry have found different ways of improving accessibility in services through their day-to-day operations and initiatives. Described below is a summary of 2011-2012 accomplishments from across the ministry in the area of customer service.

Accessibility Unit

The ministry continues to offer a central accessibility unit team. It provides expertise, research, planning and monitoring to support the integration of accessibility into the ministry business, the provision of accessible services and other accessibility improvement initiatives across the ministry. Examples of the team's key work include:

- Provided day-to-day advice and support to courthouse accessibility coordinators, accessibility leads and other staff across the ministry to help respond to individual accommodation requests and correspondence from customers with disabilities.
- Researched strategies, best practices and resources in a variety of areas such as for accommodating individuals with cognitive and communication disabilities, creating accessible formats of complex documents, standards for a tactile drawings, and accessibility considerations for procurement of microphones, ticketing machines and other products and services.

- Provided consultations to divisions upon request to support accessibility planning and special initiatives such as:
  - Making a video accessible
  - Consulting with the community on sign language interpretation
  - Providing tips on using captioning with an individual who had not used it before
  - Developing accessibility information for an online orientation training package
  - Addressing issues of information technology security and captioning services
  - Locating accommodation services in smaller communities
  - The development of program area plans for updating existing forms and documents to accessible format
  - Making an event accessible.
- Led projects on a variety of accessibility initiatives such as the procurement and implementation of assistive listening devices for courthouses; development of a request for proposal for training for webmasters and key staff on understanding the needs of assistive devices users and best practices on accessible websites; and creating a training course on creating accessible word documents.
- Supported and coordinated the activities of three accessibility committees:
  - The Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee, a justice and disability sector stakeholder committee including production of the Committee's newsletter Accessibility in Brief
  - The ministry's Accessibility Executive Steering Committee which is made up of representatives of each ministry division and works on accessibility planning throughout the year
  - The Courts Accessibility Subcommittee of the Court Services Division Corporate Planning Table. This committee includes accessibility coordinator regional leads and representatives of key courthouse services who discuss ways to improve accessible services at the courthouse level.

- Participated on committees and working groups on a variety of subjects within the ministry and across the Ontario Public Service. Examples include a committee on remote sign language interpretation, a ministry committee on a new digital information system for the courts, and a justice and legal community stakeholder subcommittee on accommodation requests in the courts.

- Coordinated monitoring of key ministry accessibility initiatives by implementing a quarterly accessibility reporting process. The process currently focuses on mandatory training, accessibility feedback, new websites and procurement processes. Key information is shared with the Deputy Minister through a quarterly report.

  - Maintained an internal website of up-to-date accessibility information, training and awareness resources for use by staff. The website was updated during the past year to include information on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation obligations as well as other resources such as a training video on sighted guide techniques to direct a person who is blind.

  - Liaised with the OPS Diversity Office on OPS-wide accessibility initiatives.

  - Coordinated the ministry response to the Certificate of Assurance Process which monitored ministry compliance with both the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. The ministry was in full compliance.

Accessibility Coordinator Service

The courthouse Accessibility Coordinator service continues as a key accessibility initiative of the ministry. Courthouse Accessibility Coordinators are the main point of contact for questions or information on accessibility of counter services or court proceedings. Coordinators respond to requests from people with a wide range of disabilities including anxiety and other mental health disabilities, visual impairments, Deafness and hearing impairments, physical and mobility disabilities, cognitive, learning and neurological disabilities. While there are many accommodations the Coordinators can provide directly, some accommodations must be decided on by a judicial official such as a judge. Accommodations may be for court participants, members of the public, legal counsel, witnesses, jurors or others participating in court services.

- Examples of accommodations in the past year include:

- Providing assistive listening devices and real-time captioning services for individuals who are hard of hearing
- Assisting with an accessible route to the courtroom for someone unable to use stairs and acting as a personal guide for a person who is visually impaired
- Providing a wheelchair for someone with disability-related fatigue
- Coordinating participation in a short hearing by teleconference
- Providing an American Sign Language interpretation for someone who is Deaf
- Providing accessible format versions of court forms and information guides including accessible electronic versions and audio tape
- Assisting clients to communicate with the judiciary about their need for additional breaks in a court proceeding, time specific scheduling of cases, or shorter days

- Information on courthouse Accessibility Coordinator services continues to be available on the ministry's Commitment to Accessibility webpage, the court Addresses webpage as well as through permanent signs in the courthouses. In addition, information about the coordinators has been added to several court guides and forms. The ministry continues to add this information to relevant documents as they are updated.

Additional Customer Service Achievements

- Like the courthouse Accessibility Coordinators, the ministry also has staff who act as accessibility leads for Crown Attorneys' Offices and for the Victim Witness Assistance Program. They provide assistance by coordinating disability accommodation in their own services and by working in cooperation with the courthouse accessibility coordinator to accommodate people for court proceedings.
- A section of the Victims and Vulnerable Persons Manual on dealing with clients with disabilities has been updated to include more information and resource material to better assist staff.

Training and Awareness

Over the past year, the ministry has continued to offer training and awareness on accessibility through initiatives at the ministry, division and program or branch level

across the province. Greater awareness of disability and accessibility will help the ministry to become more proactive in its accessibility initiatives.

- Ministry divisions have responsibility to ensure all new staff receive mandatory training developed to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation.

- The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit provides each of the ministry's divisions with results of mandatory training on a quarterly basis. Divisions are required to monitor to ensure that new staff complete the mandatory accessibility training. Key results are also reported to the Deputy Minister.

- Information on accessibility responsibilities of ministry staff was included in the online orientation for all staff created by the Human Resources Strategic Business Unit and launched in June 2012.

- In March of 2012, the Family Policy and Programs Branch coordinated two Mental Health awareness sessions in downtown Toronto for interested ministry staff. One session by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health involved a mental health survivor and the other session involved an OPS employee speaking about their experiences.

- In November of 2011 the ministry coordinated presentations to the Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee, by representatives of the Canadian Mental Health Association and Osgoode Hall Law School, on the subject of court users with mental health disabilities. In addition, over the year, the Accessibility Unit provided presentations on a variety of topics to the committee including the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation and fragrance sensitivity awareness strategies. The Facilities Management Branch provided presentations on its work on accessibility features in courthouses.

- The Victims and Vulnerable Persons Division (VVPD) implemented a Diversity Awareness Series of training sessions including the following accessibility sessions or guidance:

  - A memo and guide on mental health awareness posted on the division intranet site (February 2012)

  - A memo to staff about autism awareness (April 2012)

- A Lunch 'n Learn to recognize National Down Syndrome Awareness Week and the strengths and abilities of people with Down syndrome hosted by a staff member with a child with Down syndrome (April 2012)

- A communication on Speech and Hearing Awareness was sent to staff (May 2012)

- A Lunch 'n Learn session on Schizophrenia held on June 8, 2012 and shared with all division staff

- A presentation on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (September 2012).

- The Programs and Community Development Branch of the Victims and Vulnerable Persons Division has created a slide presentation on serving clients with disabilities. The presentation will be available on the intranet site and staff will use this resource to conduct education and outreach sessions to justice and community partners.

- In June of 2012, the Legal Services Division offered a course for legal counsel on Human Rights. The following accessibility courses were offered to the division's office managers and administrative staff:

  - Mental Health First Aid (May, 2012)

  - A one-day training course was created on Working to Help Make Ontario Accessible. This training course included presentations of the history and current context for accessibility as well as on communicating with people with disabilities and creating accessible documents. Four sessions of the course were delivered through the year.

  - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) sessions were offered in May and June to explain the ministry's obligations on privacy of personal information.

- A court staff Directive advised them of the process for providing a juror with accommodation when requested. This information was also provided in the finalized Jury Management manual which is available to all court staff on the division internal intranet site.

- A number of information and awareness sessions were also provided to third parties who provide services on behalf of the ministry. For example:

- The Courts Services Division provided a presentation and discussion on the new Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations at its May meetings of 30 external service providers who deliver family mediation and information services

- Interpreters who wish to be included in the Registry of Accredited Freelance Court Interpreters must attend a two day training session which includes accessibility training. This is in addition to completing mandatory AODA accessibility training. Since November 2011, 95 freelance interpreters completed the training

- The Victims and Vulnerable Persons Division regularly offers accessibility training, using local community resources, at its meetings for coordinators of Supervised Access Centres. The centres provide a safe, neutral and child-focused location for visits between a child and non-custodial parent or a place to drop off children when they are meeting the other parent. For example, a mental health professional from the University of Western Ontario reviewed the report Minds that Matter from the Ontario Human Rights Commission with 20 centre coordinators in the fall of 2012.

Accessibility Feedback Process

The ministry recognizes it will take many years to remove barriers to people with disabilities in all our services, buildings and programs. We encourage people with disabilities to provide feedback so that we can more quickly identify barriers and learn whether the accessibility measures we are implementing are successful.

- The ministry continues to offer a process for providing feedback on accessibility of ministry programs and services. Feedback can be provided directly in person to ministry staff or in writing, by email, TTY or phone. The process is outlined on the ministry's Our Commitment to Accessibility webpage. In addition courthouse accessibility coordinators and other staff encourage feedback when they have provided an accommodation so that we can learn from the experience of our customers.

- Local staff and managers will work with the person with a disability to address any barriers immediately or to provide disability accommodation. For example if a courthouse or courtroom is not accessible, the Accessibility Coordinator can assist in requesting a move of the case to a courtroom that is accessible.

- Sometimes feedback will result in a change in our practices. For example, a person provided feedback through the ministry's General Enquiry TTY line about having

difficulty contacting the local court using a TTY relay service. The Communications Branch worked closely with local court staff and found that the best way to meet the person's needs was to communicate with them by email. As a result, General Enquiry staff have adopted a practice to ask if the TTY caller wishes to communicate further by email.

- In the past year the ministry has continued to improve its feedback process. All ministry divisions with public services have now implemented a division process for tracking and reporting feedback through the accessibility quarterly reporting process. This ensures the division is able to monitor trends in feedback and that accessibility improvements that cannot be made right away are tracked for future planning.

- The Accessibility Unit also monitors overall ministry feedback in order to identify trends and to seek and offer advice on solutions. The areas of highest feedback were: accessibility of some of our older buildings, (addressed further below in the buildings section): long lineups to enter the court on jury days; directions in the courthouse and accessible doors openers. When contacted in advance, courthouse Accessibility Coordinators can work with customers with disabilities to address these and other issues through accommodations.

- Several areas of the ministry have also included questions on accessibility in their existing customer service surveys.

  - The Courts Services Division implements the Courts Counter Service Customer Satisfaction Survey and the Family Law Information Centre Survey. In both cases over 60% of people with disabilities said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their services. For the Family Law Mandatory Information Program, 76.7% of those with a disability were satisfied the services were accessible to them. We hope our efforts to improve accessibility over the next year will increase that level of satisfaction

  - The Victims Witness Assistance Program Client Satisfaction Survey identified a good deal of positive feedback such as:

    - A person with a broken ankle and seizure disorder said that a wheelchair was provided to them with much compassion and concern

    - A person with an intellectual disability reported that information was explained to them in a way they could understand with dignity

- Another person reported that the staff were "always concerned with my health and well-being as their biggest concern. Appreciated."

Notice of Service Disruption

- The ministry continues to notify the public about temporary disruptions to accessibility-related services and facilities by posting signs and identifying other ways to obtain service. The Business Continuity and Emergency Management Unit of the Corporate Services Management Division has established a process that outlines how the ministry will provide notice to customers when temporary disruptions occur to services, equipment or facilities that people with disabilities normally use to obtain service such as an elevator. The Notice of Service Disruption includes information on other ways people can access services. This process to post notices has now been built into integrated business continuity plans.

- Several examples of the use of the notice of service disruption occurred in the past year.

  - Courthouse services had to be relocated as a result of a fire at the Sault Ste. Marie courthouse and tornado damage to the Huron County Courthouse in Goderich. Notices were posted on the ministry website and locally.

  - More recently, a flood at the Ottawa courthouse resulted in a notice of service disruption to alert people with disabilities about where they could obtain services and how to contact the accessibility coordinator.

Built Environment

The ministry operates over 170 court locations across the province as well as many other buildings and offices. Accessibility is addressed in any renovations and in new buildings. The ministry also tries to upgrade necessary accessibility features in existing buildings each year so that over time we will improve accessibility across all our buildings and offices.

- The ministry Facilities Management Branch included a two-hour workshop on accessibility as part of its on boarding program for new staff. Resources on accessibility have also been incorporated into the branch orientation program for new staff.

- The Facilities Management Branch also has built accessibility into several business processes including:

- All branch procurement include accessibility requirements where needed
- All facilities projects are reviewed for opportunities to improve accessibility
- The branch sets aside money each year to improve accessibility in current courts, buildings and offices.

- The ministry recognizes that many of its courthouses across the province are older and were not designed with accessibility in mind. The ministry is continuing to make progress on removing barriers in our buildings across the province but it will take time. In the meantime, where the level of accessibility of a courthouse does not meet a person's needs, the courthouse Accessibility Coordinator is happy to work with the person to find other ways to provide accessible services.

- The following is a sample of some of the accessibility projects across the province that were completed in the past year:
  - Cornwall – 216-218 Pitt Street - Two interview rooms in the Victim Witness Assistance Program office had accessible counters installed
  - St. Catharines – Renovations to courtrooms 6 and 7 included barrier free access to the judicial dais, court/clerk workstations and the witness box
  - Kenora – 216 Water Street -The public counter was made accessible
  - Toronto, Osgoode Hall - Automatic door openers and duress buttons were installed in washrooms on the 3rd floor
  - Toronto, 393 University - Barrier-free dais installed in courtroom 905 and a barrier-free Conference/Motion room created
  - Ottawa – As a result of renovations following flooding, witness boxes in two courtrooms were made accessible
  - Peterborough, 70 Simcoe Street – The benches were adjusted in four courtrooms to accommodate wheelchairs
  - Sudbury – A new accessible public counter was constructed
  - Haileybury - An accessible Legal Aid Ontario office was built
  - Cochrane – Construction of an accessible prisoner/lawyer interview room.

- The Office of the Children's Lawyer undertook a renovation to its reception area including making the counter accessible, wider doors and an accessible washroom.

- The ministry continues to have regard for accessibility as it enters new leases or renews a lease for a building or office. Facilities Management Branch works closely with Infrastructure Ontario to ensure that accessibility is negotiated into new and renewed leases where possible. Accessibility requirements are included in the rated criteria when considering a site for a new lease. For lease renewals Facilities Management Branch attempts to have landlords include compliance to the most current accessibility standards in renewal proposals.

- Standard and advanced accessibility requirements are consistently included in contracts for the design and construction of new courthouse buildings. For example all new courthouse projects will include barrier-free curb cuts, ramps, and path of travel through the front entrance and into all public-access areas. Automatic doors openers, accessible signage with braille, appropriately sized and with good contrast, and accessible counters. Advanced accessibility designs unique to courthouses are also included such as wheelchair accessible jury, witness and prisoner boxes as well as other features.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The ministry has adopted and is complying with the Ontario Public Service directives and policies addressing accessibility in the areas of information and communications, employment and procurement to ensure compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations.

- The Ministry of the Attorney General is in compliance with the 2012 requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

- The ministry provides a link to the "Ontario Public Service Policies that Make Accessibility Work" guide on accessibility directives and policies in the Ontario Public Service on its Our Commitment to Accessibility webpage.

Information and Communications

Communications

- Assistive Listening Devices are the most commonly requested accommodation in ministry courthouses. To support effective communication for people who are hard of hearing, the Accessibility Unit, with financial support of the Facilities Management

Branch, created a two-year project to procure and distribute assistive listening devices to all permanent courthouses. During the past year the procurements were completed and guidance resources were developed. Eight different guides and training modules on set up and trouble-shooting of the eight different types of assistive listening systems have been created and are posted online for staff. The project will be completed by March 31, 2013.

- The Policy and Adjudicative Tribunals Division assisted in making public consultations for the review of the Ontario Human Rights system accessible by ensuring accessible buildings were used and by providing American Sign Language Interpreters, assistive listening devices, real-time captioning, seating assistance, accessible communication formats and individual accommodations.

- Each member of the Communications Branch Corporate Communications Correspondence and Public Inquiries Unit who responds to inquiries has been trained to use the TTY line.

- A project to enhance the availability of qualified sign language interpreters for court services is nearing completion. Recommendations will be finalized in March 2013.

Accessible Documents and Formats

The services of the Ministry of the Attorney General often involve the use of information documents and forms. Increasing the accessibility of our forms, documents and communications continues therefore to be a major focus of the accessibility work in the ministry.

- The ministry provides accessible formats of documents and forms on request.
- All ministry safety plans are maintained in accessible electronic format so they can quickly be provided in an alternate accessible format if requested.
- In addition, the Accessibility Unit is working through a strategy to support each division with public facing services to proactively address the accessibility of their existing documents and forms. The most commonly used documents are being identified and addressed first. Guidance on creating accessible documents and forms is posted on the ministry's internal webpage on accessibility resources.
- As part of the ministry's accessible documents strategy, the Accessibility Unit offered a hands-on training session on creating accessible Word 2010 documents for key staff from each division. The OPS Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence delivered the training to over 50 ministry staff. The Centre also created a special online training package for the ministry on creating accessible documents in Word 2003 as some areas of the ministry still use Word 2003.
- As a standard practice the Communications Branch ensures that all email responses to the ministry's general enquiry email are provided in accessible format. All internal memos and newsletters sent within the ministry by the branch are also provided in accessible electronic format.
- The ministry's Communications Branch works with divisions and branches to conduct plain language reviews of web content and documents. Examples of material that has been reviewed in the past year include: Victim/Witness Impact Statement, content in the criminal law section of the Justice Ontario website and Guidelines for Applying for a Certification of Appointment of Estate Trustee.
- In early 2012, the Court of Appeal for Ontario implemented Microsoft Word decision templates for use by the judiciary, legal secretaries, staff lawyers and law clerks to ensure all decisions released by the Court on the internet are accessible to the profession, media and the public.

- Family Policy and Programs Branch revised the "Guide to Family Court Procedure" and the "Guide to Motions to Change" using plain language and accessible Microsoft Word format. In addition, the primary family law publication, "What You Should Know about Family Law in Ontario" was revised and posted in a more accessible format. Previously these guides were only available in Portable Document Format (PDF).

- As a result of requests from customers, the following small claims and family forms were created in accessible format upon request during the past year. They will also be made available in accessible electronic format on the Ontariocourtforms.on.ca website.

  - 7A, Plaintiff's Claim
  - 8A, Affidavit of Service
  - 20E, Notice of Garnishment
  - 20H, Notice of Examination
  - 20P, Affidavit for Enforcement Request
  - 8, Application (General)
  - 8A, Application (Divorce)
  - Financial Statement

- Another component of ministry's effort to improve accessibility of its documents is to take the opportunity to improve accessibility when documents are updated or reprinted. For example:

  - The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee and Ontario Victim Services added the wording "available in alternate format upon request" to their brochure reprints.

- The Courts Services Division has been adding a notice about the availability of accessibility coordinator services and the ministry's TTY phone number to relevant court forms as they are revised. For example, in June 2012, the adoption application form was updated to include this information.

- As the result of changes to court rules regarding estate forms, the Civil Policy and Programs Branch was able to revise the forms to make them simpler and easier to use and created an accessible Microsoft Word electronic format.

Websites and Web Applications

- All new or significantly refreshed ministry websites and web applications must be identified through the Accessibility Quarterly Reporting Process and are expected to meet the accessibility requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA (with the exception of live captions and audio descriptions). If it is not possible to do so a documented explanation must be provided. To date new or significantly refreshed ministry websites and applications have met the accessibility requirements.

- Much of the information on the ministry's main public website is provided in accessible electronic format. When this is not possible, such as in the case of large reports, the information is made available in plain text format in addition to accessible Portable Document Format (PDF) format to ensure everyone can use them.

- The Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee and the Justice of the Peace Appointment Advisory Committee converted their internal ministry websites to accessible HTML format. Many documents posted on the website have also been converted into accessible formats and others will be provided in accessible format upon request.

- A link to a page of information about courthouse accessibility coordinators and how to request disability accommodations was added to the Ontario Court Forms website.

Procurement

The ministry continues to comply with the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. This includes requirements address interactive electronic devices such as point of sale systems or kiosks.

- The Chief Executive Officer of the ministry informed all staff and managers of the obligations to address accessibility in procurement. The ministry's Accessibility Unit also met with key staff involved in procurement across the ministry to make them

aware of the requirements. The Controllership Unit and key division staff with procurement responsibilities provide reminders about the need to incorporate accessibility. In addition the Accessibility Unit is available to provide advice on how to identify accessibility requirements for procurement when needed.

- The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit sent out a reminder to all ministry managers about accessibility in procurement using the Accessibility@Source information materials on accessible procurement developed by the Ontario Public Service Diversity Office. Examples of addressing accessibility in procurement include:

  - The Court Business Solutions Branch of Court Services Division has included the following wording in all Requests for Service and Statements of Work documents which are used to request services from vendors:

    - AODA Compliance: All work done by the vendor must meet the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards for the development of public and internal websites. Specifically work must comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, Level AA. For more references see http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/.

  - The French Language Services Unit requires that the site selected for the annual training session must be accessible.

  - As part of the fall accessibility quarterly reporting process coordinated by the Accessibility Unit, all divisions have been asked to put policies, procedures or processes in place to ensure that they are able to continue to meet the procurement requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation.

- The Accessibility Unit has provided resources on accessibility in procurement and links to Ontario Public Service corporate guidance on accessibility in procurement on the ministry accessibility webpage.

Employment

Over the past year the ministry continued its commitment to identify and remove barriers to employees with disabilities in the ministry and to provide employment accommodation.

- The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit continued to provide support to managers to help them access specialized services for workplace accommodations through the corporate services offered by HROntario.

- Ministry employees with disabilities are offered an opportunity to discuss any emergency evacuation needs and to develop an evacuation plan with their manager. For example, each time evacuation training/planning is done, the Policy and Adjudicative Tribunals Division asked current staff to identify any need for accommodation including emergency evacuation.

- The ministry also offered a Diversity Mentorship program allowing employees with disabilities to request a mentor to provide advice on career development. The mentor may also learn more about accessibility through the mentorship sessions.

- Accessibility was included in the performance commitments of all managers, directors and assistant deputy attorney generals.

  - The commitment for managers and directors is: Advance organizational values and strategies including, accessibility, green and service excellence.

  - The commitment for assistant deputy attorney generals is: Integrate organizational values and strategies including diversity, accessibility, green and service excellence into core business practices.

- The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit of the ministry launched an online orientation resource centre in April 2012 to assist managers and new employees with orientation to the ministry, their responsibilities and opportunities. Accessibility considerations were a key part of the initiative. and advice was provided by a representative from the Accessibility Unit. The ministry orientation program was made a requirement for new hires and their managers as of October 1, 2012.

- The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit offered focus groups to ministry employees with disabilities. The employees were asked for their input on any issues or concerns they have as well as for their suggestions to increase the engagement of employees with disabilities with the ministry.

- The ministry's representative to the Ontario Public Service Disability Advisory Council also wrote to all ministry employees to ask if they were interested in joining a mailing list to get involved with the council and find out more about its work. The ministry representative is Chair of the council which provides a voice for employees

with disabilities on issues that affect them and offers advice to the Ontario Public Service on improving accessibility.

- The ministry also addresses accessibility in the recruitment process. For example, the Victims and Vulnerable Persons Division includes the following wording in written employment advertisements and documents: "If you require a need for any form of accommodation during this interview process, please let me know". Applicants contacted by phone are also asked if they need accommodation

- Preventative ergonomic accommodations were offered to employees in several branches across the ministry. In addition a staff member with a visual impairment was provided with specialized lighting and a fully adjustable workstation was installed for an employee.

Section Two: Measures Planned for 2012-13 and Beyond

Our Statement of Commitment:

The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services, products and facilities.

This year, the Ministry of the Attorney General's accessibility plan focuses on six key areas. In order to demonstrate leadership in accessibility, our ministry is planning the activities described below. At a minimum, these initiatives will support compliance with the existing Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Integrated Accessibility Standards under the AODA and other areas.

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Built Environment
- Procurement
- Accessibility Training
- Employment.

The ministry will also take advantage of new opportunities that arise during the year as any new work of the ministry is planned or initiated.

Customer Service

The Ministry of the Attorney General is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities receive accessible goods and services.

- Courthouse Accessibility Coordinators will continue to act as the main point of contact for information or requests for accommodation for courthouse proceedings, programs and counter services. Accessibility leads in Crown Attorneys' Offices and Victim Witness Assistance Program offices will continue to respond to requests in their own programs and work in cooperation with the courthouse Accessibility Coordinator.
  - The Accessibility Unit will continue to support the accessibility coordinator services of Courts Services Division, Crown Law Division and Victims and Vulnerable Services Division through advice, guidance, training and resources.

Timeframe: Ongoing

- The Accessibility Unit will work cooperatively with the Ontario Courts Accessibility Subcommittee, courthouse Accessibility Coordinators and Accessibility Leads to identify and provide additional training, guidance or supports required by accessibility coordinators and leads over the coming year.

  Timeframe: Ongoing

- A courthouse Accessibility Coordinator Regional Lead and a member of the ministry Accessibility Unit will provide a presentation on the courthouse accessibility coordinator service to a group of practicing lawyers in an education session offered by the Law Society of Upper Canada. The session will be taped for presentation to future groups. In February 2013 a similar presentation is planned for a group of law students through an education session also offered by from the Law Society of Upper Canada. These opportunities will help to inform legal counsel of services that can benefit their clients with disabilities.

  Timeframe: November 2012 and February 2013

- The Accessibility Unit will continue to work with the Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee and its subcommittees as well as with the ministry Accessibility Executive Steering Committee and the Courts Accessibility Subcommittee to monitor and improve accessibility in the courts and in the ministry.

  - The Accessibility Unit will continue to work with the Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee on a plan for Fragrance Free Awareness signage and information for courthouses.

  Timeframe: Ongoing

Information and Communications

The Ministry of the Attorney General is strongly committed to making information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and how we communicate it are key to delivering our programs and services to the public.

- The ministry will continue its strategy to provide alternate formats upon request and to plan and upgrade existing documents to accessible electronic format.

  - Divisions will continue their strategies to upgrade the accessibility of existing forms and documents to accessible electronic formats.

  Timeframe: Ongoing

- All divisions of the ministry will continue to use plain language to the extent possible in new documents and forms to be used by the public and in existing documents and forms being revised.

Timeframe: Ongoing

- The Accessibility Unit will provide updated information on the internal process for responding to requests for accessible formats of documents on the Accessibility webpage. The Unit will also continue to provide accessibility resources created by the Information and Information Technology Accessibility Centre of Excellence and the OPS Diversity Office including the Accessibility at Source information materials on accessible formats.

  Timeframe: June 2013

- The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy application and personal information authorization forms (English and French) will be revised to meet accessibility requirements.

  Timeframe: June 2013

- The Accessibility Unit of the ministry will complete its two year project to implement assistive listening devices in all permanent courthouses with the assistance of courthouse Accessibility Coordinators and the Justice Technology Service. Assistive listening devices are the most frequently requested accommodation in courthouses.

  Timeframe: March 2013

- The ministry will ensure that its processes for receiving feedback are accessible to people with disabilities by providing accessible formats or communication supports upon request.

  Timeframe: January 2013

- The Family, Policy and Programs Branch of the Court Services Division is undertaking a project to address the accessibility, plain language and ease of use of the eight most commonly used family court forms.

  Timeframe: October 2013

- The Provincial Offences Act Unit of the Courts Services Division is working with its municipal partners to identify a process to support requests from people with disabilities for accessible formats of Provincial Offences Act forms. It is also working to identify the most commonly used forms and to develop a strategy for ensuring those forms are accessible.

  Timeframe: October 2014

- The Communications Branch and the Accessibility Unit will continue to work cooperatively with ministry divisions to monitor and report on new or significantly refreshed websites or web applications through the Accessibility Quarterly Reporting Process.

  Timeframe: October 2013

Built Environment

The Ministry of the Attorney General is committed to greater accessibility in, out of and around the buildings we use. The ministry will continue to address accessibility in new buildings, in renovations and where needed as upgrades to existing buildings. Additional specific initiatives currently planned for the coming year include:

- The Facilities Management Branch will implement new signage designed to be accessible (with large font, good contrast and braille) and to help people find their way in courthouses in 12 courthouse sites.

  Timeframe: March 2013

- The Facilities Management Branch will perform pilot accessibility audits of three existing courthouses. The information from the audit will be used to complete a standard approach for accessibility audits considering up-to date accessibility standards.

  Timeframe: March 2013

- The ministry has continued yearly to address barriers to people with disabilities in our existing courthouses. Over the coming year, the ministry will develop a multi-year accessibility strategy to continuously improve accessibility of the Ontario's government courthouse portfolio for people with disabilities.

  Timeframe: September 2013

- During the coming year, new courthouses with advanced accessibility features will open in Waterloo (spring 2013), Quinte (summer 2012) and Thunder Bay (fall 2013). These courthouses will feature accessibility in all public areas and advanced features such as height adjustable lecterns and witness boxes. The witness box and jury box are also accessible to people in wheelchairs.

  Timeframe: October 2013

Procurement

The Ministry of the Attorney General is committed to integrating accessibility considerations into our procurement processes and into individual procurements.

Ministry divisions are accountable for ensuring their procurements meet the accessibility requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations and of OPS and ministry policies regarding accessibility in procurement.

- Managers and procurement staff will continue to monitor procurements to insure they include accessibility, and the Accessibility Unit will continue to provide advice and assistance as needed.
  - The Accessibility Unit will continue to communicate and post any additional corporate or other resources on accessibility in procurement and to issue reminders to divisions about their obligations on procurement.
  - Reminders will also be shared with divisions to consider accessibility requirements in contracts with third party providers.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Accessibility Training

The ministry will continue its focus of increasing the disability and accessibility knowledge of key staff in areas relevant to their duties.

- The ministry will continue to ensure that new ministry staff complete mandatory accessibility training and that managers and supervisors take required training on accommodating employees with disabilities.

  Timeline: Ongoing

- The Accessibility Unit of the ministry will coordinate implementation of new training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and on the Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities. Divisions will manage tracking and compliance of the training.

  Timeline: Ongoing

- The Accessibility Unit is coordinating a project to procure and offer specialized training on understanding the accessibility needs of assistive device users and on compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for websites and web applications for approximately 80 staff.

  Timeline: Ongoing

- The ministry will continue working on a two-year community project by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Toronto Branch to develop a training package for the justice sector on communicating with people with mental health disabilities. The

project is funded by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario of the Ministry of Community and Social Services through its Enabling Change Partnerships Project.

- A member of the Accessibility Unit is participating on the Steering committee for the project.

- Staff from the Criminal Law Division and Courts Services Division are participating on the Advisory Committee for the project.

Timeline: March 2014

Employment

The Ministry of the Attorney General is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities. In addition, the ministry is committed to ensuring employees with disabilities can participate fully and meaningfully in the work of the ministry.

- The ministry will continue to comply with OPS policies and procedures on employment accommodation of employees and job applicants with disabilities including new requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

  Timeline: Ongoing

- The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit will continue to remind ministry managers on a regular basis of their obligations to accommodate employees with disabilities in all activities of employment including emergency evacuation and to document accommodation plans.

  - The unit will also continue to support managers in accessing specialized services through HROntario in order to provide workplace accommodations.

  Timeline: Ongoing

- The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit will analyse results of focus groups with employees with disabilities held in the fall of 2012 in order to identify issues and develop a plan to improve the engagement of employees with disabilities.

  Timeline: September 2013

- The Court Services Division and the Facilities Management Branch of the Corporate Services Management Division will work together to address the accommodation needs of any judicial officials in ministry courthouses.

  Timeline: Ongoing

Section Three: Review of Acts, Regulations and Policies

In support of our commitment to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, the Ministry of the Attorney General continues to review government initiatives, including legislation and policies, to identify and remove barriers.

The Ministry of the Attorney General is also playing a leadership role in supporting other ministries in their review of legislation for accessibility barriers.

Acts, Regulations and Policies Reviewed in 2011-12

- The OPS Inclusion Lens, a tool to help review for barriers to accessibility in policies, programs or legislation, continues to be promoted to all staff on the Accessibility resources webpage of the ministry accessibility website.

- The Office of the Legislative Counsel, which is responsible for drafting legislation in cooperation with ministries, held two education sessions in late 2011 on principles to be used in reviewing for barriers and the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens as used in the legislative drafting process.

Acts, Regulations and Policies to Be Reviewed in 2012-13

The OPS Diversity Office and the Ministry of the Attorney General have developed a coordinated approach to continue with the review of government legislation for accessibility barriers. In this next phase, high impact statutes that meet the following criteria will be reviewed:

a. Statutes that affect persons with disabilities directly;

b. Statutes that provide for the delivery of widely applicable services or programs;

c. Statutes that provide benefits or protections; or

d. Statutes that affect a democratic or civic right or duty.

This phase of the review will be completed by the end of 2014. The government has decided to review these statutes because it is anticipated that changes in these areas will have the highest impact on those Ontarians who have accessibility needs. We will continue to report on the review in our annual accessibility plan.

In 2012-13, the Ministry of the Attorney General will review the following acts:

- Blind Persons' Rights Act

- Compensation for Victims of Crime Act

- Election Act
- Employers and Employees Act
- Family Law Act
- Human Rights Code
- Juries Act
- Legal Aid Services Act, 1998
- Limitations Act, 2002
- Parental Responsibility Act, 2000
- Public Guardian and Trustee Act
- Real Property Limitations Act
- Substitute Decisions Act, 1992
- Trustee Act
- Victims' Bill of Rights, 1995

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

MAG – Ministry of the Attorney General

MYAP – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

OPS – Ontario Public Service

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

WCAG - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

For More Information

Questions or comments about the Ministry of the Attorney General ODA Accessibility Plan are always welcome.

Please phone: Ministry of the Attorney General

General inquiry number: 416-326-2220 or 1-800-518-7901

General inquiry TTY number: 416-326-4012 or 1-877-425-0575

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Ministry website address: www.ontario.ca/attorneygeneral

Visit the **Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario** web portal. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario an accessible province for everyone.

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